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F/A-18 trainers receive 360-degree high definition visual system

The F/A-18 Tactical Operational Flight Trainers, located at Naval Air Station Oceana, Va., received state-of-the-art upgrades to include a High Definition, 360-degree visual system and motion cuing seats. A recent requirements analysis identified visual acuity and motion as top priorities to increase F/A-18 simulation training effectiveness. U.S. Navy photo.

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. -- The F/A-18 Tactical Operational Flight Trainers (TOFT), Naval Air Station Oceana, Va., recently received state-of-the-art upgrades to their cockpit systems.

The new visual system upgrade, developed by L-3 Corporation's Link Simulation & Training division of Arlington, Texas, uses High Definition (HD) technology, the first HD 360-degree visual system for the F/A-18 platform. Upgrades consists of new projectors, mirrors and image computers that give pilots and naval flight officers the same visual perspective they have in the aircraft, including night vision goggle training.

"Through this new visual package, aircrew will become more proficient in recognition and target identification, as well as experience simulated carrier landings with a clarity and fidelity not yet seen in the Navy's simulation of fighter aircraft," said Lt. Cmdr. Brian Baller, F/A-18 training systems integrated product team lead, Naval Aviation Training

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Systems Program Office (PMA-205) here.

In addition to the HD-9 visual system upgrade, the TOFTs will receive new motion cuing seats that will simulate the feel of the aircraft employing weapons; taxiing, take-off and landing; and motion simulation of special effects, such as positive and negative gravitational forces.

"PMA-205 is enriching F/A-18 simulation by enhancing priorities identified by the Naval Aviation Simulation Master Plan study. What does this mean to the warfighter? It means effective training, which promotes increased performance and mission readiness," Baller added.

Recently, a NASMP requirements analysis identified the physical and functional requirements of training systems that enhance the performance of aircrew and mission readiness of the platform. The evaluation identified visual perception and motion cueing as top priorities to increase F/A-18 simulation training effectiveness.

“The goal at PMA-205 is to ensure our warfighters are proficient and effective before they even step into an actual aircraft,” said Capt. John Feeney, Naval Aviation Training Systems Program Office (PMA-205) program manager. “By implementing these advanced technologies into the F/A-18 trainers, our pilots and naval flight officers will be even better prepared for live-fly scenarios.”